VIRGIN WORDS



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The English translation of Hildegard's Lingua ignota

Hildegard of Bingen, the infamous abbess of medieval Germany, continues to speak to us today as a poet, prophet, composer, artist, natural scientist, and healer: recordings of her hauntingly ethereal compositions are a staple of any "Pre-Classical" and "Early Music" sections of well-stocked music stores; she's left us drawings and descriptions of angelic visions that are as surreal and compelling as anything in the Christian canon this side of Patmos; and her belief in the divine healing properties of plants is being echoed in the homeopathy movements of today.

What sets her apart from her contemporary clerical visionaries goes beyond the fact that she was a female working in an imposingly male field. The thing that jumps out -- for me, at least -- is that every aspect of her work is so *Hildegardian*. Her music seems to be the abstract dance of the ideas in her writings. Her writings speak of a "God" and "Jesus" that have an almost magical, fairy-tale freshness that I haven't experienced since I was in kindergarten at my Catholic grade school. Her Hildegardian-ness spans the various arts in such a way that leaps beyond the barrier-breaking ideals of post-modernism -- and it was all done well over 300 years before Albrecht Durer and Leonardo turned themselves into European brand names.

Hildegard boiled down the spirit of this essence when she penned the *Lingua ignota*, a glossary of over 1000 nouns of an angelic language. In this work, she names everything, from God, to aspects of the church, family, and society, to trees, parts of the body, birds, and insects -- again with the freshness of a mystical, female Adam giving everything in Paradise its nomenclature in a pre-Hebrew tongue. Jeffrey T. Schnapp suggests that Hildegard's glossary allows names and nouns to "simply radiate their meanings and interconnections, without ever having to decline into the carnivalesque world of pronouns, verbs, predicates, modifiers or adjectives," a situation that is certainly *apropos* of her "virgin" language.

Whether the word list was actually an intellectual game, an inside joke, or sincerely divine, Hildegard plainly admitted to Pope Anastasius IV that she had been inspired by God "to form unknown letters, and utter an unknown language, and to resound with melody its many tones." Hildegard scholar Barbara Newman theorizes that the unknown language, with its accompanying alphabet, was linked to Hildegard's music and the mystical life of her community of clergy

Virgin Words The English Translation of Hildegard's Lingua ignota Copyright 2004 Peter Krueger. and followers. Her sisterhood in Rupertsberg was renown for its unorthodox rites and traditions, most notably the "tiaras" that Hildegard designed for her nuns to wear:

"...a virgin's head would be covered with a white veil, because of the radiantwhite robe that human beings had in paradise, and lost. On her head would be a
circlet with three colors conjoined into one -- an image of the Trinity -- and four
roundels attached: the one on the forehead showing the lamb of God, that on the
right a cherub, that on the left an angel, and on the back a human being -- all these
inclining towards the Trinity. This emblem, granted to me, will proclaim
blessings to God, because he had clothed the first man in radiant brightness."

As with every entry in the virgin language, God, Paradise, and Virginity are free to "radiate their meanings." Hildegard has left us this seemingly inexplicable glossary to re-discover the world that she saw with the same delicate touch of imagination that she was blessed with.

References

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algonz God aieganz angel ziujenz saint liuionz savior dinueliz devil ispariz spirit inimois human iur man vanix woman peuearrez patriarch korzinthio prophet falschin seer sonziz apostle imschiol martyr zanziuer confessor vrizoil virgin jugiza widow

pangizo penitent kulzphazur ancestor phazur grandfather peueriz father maiz mother hilzpeueriz stepfather hilzmaiz stepmother scirizin son hilzsciriz stepson limzkil infant zainz boy, child zimzial juvenile bischiniz adolescent malkunz elder fronly brother miskila sister peuors paternal uncle fanschol maternal uncle pleniza friend malzfla aunt funschiol son-in-law liaziz daughter-in-law zimbia mother-in-law scalr father-in-law heniz granchild foring husband kauela wife loiffol family, clan, people hochziz blind person nosinz deaf person hiszin poor-eyesighted

sciniz stammerer keliz lisper scarpinz mute kollanz lame person pariziz impotent phanizchin addict siliziz stomach ache stragulz paralytic pasizio leper ranzgia, raizgia tongue holl head forischial face ambila back of head frens vertebrae fasinz skull faraliz scalp ceril brain zirinschol cerebellum scala crown of head sterauinzla forehead amzil neck guia back of neck omalz hair milischa head of hair omalziriz lock of hair lasinz single hair criberanz head of hair, long hair luzeia eye fonix pupil luzpomphia eyeball

luzerealz eyesocket luziliet eyelash luziminispier eyelid pilsemia eyebrow vguwiz tear oir ear olrunguizol earwax oirchamisil ear cartilage hascutil nose nascuzirz nostril hascumisil nose cartilage pusinzia nasal mucus wisanza cheek maiaz jaws scamilin temple moniz mouth calzim lip osinz jawbone maletinosinz lower lip vimzial gums malskir tooth osinzmalskir molar gulzia maw, throat franix uvula gruzia, kolezia throat firanz saliva kolecruriz Adam's apple koletabejaz neck maletin chin viriscal beard zizia mustache

dulsielz face, countenance scalzio shoulder scaintila shoulderblade junix armpit branizel arm discol muscle luguriz elbow jurstaniz forearm hilzial wrist vrzial hand zirins finger pizel thumb conix knuckles salziox fingernail pidago fingerprint magux fist benizscia right side silisza left side waring wart, scab galich limb burbeiscal torso burbefeleiz chest laniscal breast veriszoil stomach stranguliz navel cirziel kidney iuncxozil thigh spirizan abdomen tilzia belly schicial one's side kosinzia rib

rimziol back
scorinz heart
jeuriz liver
molliz lung
scauril esophagus
uiperiz spleen
idiez galibladder
gloiz small kidney
vnguizol fat
virzela bowels
dariz intestines
bulanz bladder
fluanz urine
rubianz blood



suinz sweat domiel buttocks vuoliz rump zirzer anus meginz feces creueniz penis ("male limb") uirlaiz testicles lizia gland ainzglizia clitoris ("protected gland") fragizlanz vagina ("shame") croich leg boil knee cliuanz bone cruniz shin schiacruniz shinbone moueniz calf milisch marrow tabeializ vein crouiz ankle vrzoja heel funiz sole misanz toe fuscal foot ranzil bruise, scar hosinz disease minscol ulcer abiliz bladder infection razil poison scirinz plague pasiz leprosy

bezelun skin disease ruschila, monzil itch kelionz pope karinz cardinal arrezenpholianz archbishop enpholianz bishop scallo cleric scalzido, kolscanz priest telzion, zeuinoz deacon tilzeulnoz subdeacon zincol acolyte scuring exorcist hiscalnoiz lector oriezio porter, doorman, gatekeeper gasinz chancellor prouerz provost kanesilis cantor luschil sacristan agiziniz schoolmaster agilarchiniz teacher silzimian student lunchkal disciple larchizin scribe abiol abbot spariz prior morizin monk reimonz nun phalischer cloistered nun or monk orinschiel hermit

ophalin temple monzchia monastery crizia church clainzo monastery, convent miziabiza oratory praiz chorus kaido inner chapel, shrine, sanctuary zirinzil portico oneziz door hilziol double doors tirix lintel, threshhold scolloz upper threshhold poimiz doorpost gulioz, galantiz door hinge sparinzia lock pioranz key pezimil bolt, bar bizimonz foundation stauring stone, rock kalirinz square, squared stone michzio cement kolezin sand branzin chalk ronzis balance, level gunzschula wall stirpheniz pavement kolinzia column fuschalloz ground/base wall pillix capital

dioranz vault, arch sinziol protective roof, arch bilidio tomb, vault phalidiz apse lanschil analogue dluloz throne, platform tronischia bishop's throne stalticholz altar gramizel step blanzio ciborium sanccuua crypt, tomb zinzrinz spiral staircase pharisch cone tonizma little bell clomischol bell zela rope diriz ring colinzko paneled ceiling phaliz painting umbrizio roof goring beam sciloz, pizimanz board, plank zilozion parapet lamisch brick tonzion shingle farischomil gable mizirzeis vent abiza house talizima wall, barrier

philxima container, box, capsule spancriz Kirchweihe (anniv. of a church's consecration) lunzikol cross milizamiz image, icon timzaloz censer donix incense box phamkil wax dilisch fat, tallow zizimina oil kinchzia, phamziolaz candle kinchscalis candelabra liuizanz oil lamp spinzia torch, candle scurinz flame bulizin pyx moleziz wafer, host amozla eucharist vaschiro eucharist cup pamsiz paten phirzianz small pipe, fistula, test tube phinziol urn, bucket sparizin palm frond phazia bottle, ampule libizamanz book kirzanzlibiz missal gonzio lectionary izimziolibiz gospel book musgal graduale book



bugeziol antiphon book jamischiz hymnal guziminz collection schimischonz psaltery, psalm book amziliz homily mumizalibiz morning book titilalz breviary buenz antiphon dunaz responsory braiz verse onez canticle guzinz contribution mimischanz capital scarinz undertunic amlizima liturgical shouldercloth tizzia liturgical tunic

zizzion belt, sash, chastity belt olzimia liturgical hand-towel tunchział stole, sash scolmiz robe, gown zimiza Mass hut pazidol pallium zinfrozia liturgical sandals palox mitre kolgira bishop's staff/crook minschal banner tilifzla carpet, rug squamel curtain zinkia handle korischol silk inchscola hand towel pereziliuz, rischol king peranz prince scaltizio palatine, imperial malzienz count scardux duke zienz earl zichzienz lawman kinchziol attorney, defender tronziol patron crimiziol vizier gazio troop, troops sarziz legion, army, horde glosinz battle front iuriz judge fillisch courtier

zimzitama army viliscal people of a nation dulschiliz crowd kanchziol expedition, campaign kanzil military service, training zilix companion durziol soldier, knight perezim indentured slave culiginz manager, administrator doziz officer, official clizio guarantor, sponsor fraizola houseguest milzonziz cupbearer gospilianz yard-master, court-master spaninz miller buschibol baker lifziol cook birscheiz dish of food dirischil drink scotilzio cook schiraizon treasurer garginz gardener larginchziz artist sporinzio country-person anziur farmer gogglizil mower dilimischol reaper

planzimor vinegrower bosinz herdsman garazin swineherd virzunz mule driver scaliziz shepherd sunchzil shoemaker latingin tanner gulzianz potter loinscho wool worker scabiriz fisher figirez painter smaletis blacksmith zaueriz goldsmith bisianz silversmith munchzidol money changer fronzios usurer folicio merchant. businessman



firmaniz stonemason baulriz weaver auiriz captain scilmiol seaman doulzlo carpenter moruzio butcher dalscil grocer, retailer borschil customs agent gaurizio fiddle/lyre player scamizio actor, mime baleuinz joker lizo dancer uirueniz whore maluizia prostitute cliuinx traveling magician ranschil loudmouth, gossip malzispianz detractor scorinzin whisperer, mutterer solchdamiz flatterer fugizlo drunkard dolemiz gourmet bizioliz drinker siccioniz criminal, bandit rabiniz robber uirtimanz thief delezio dwarf logizkal giant durziuanz attendant, retinue oirschal trumpeter

fulscaioliz fowler, birdtrapper. belualz hunter kolsinzio dealer, trader viniscolinz middleman, transferrer razinthia translator sparfoliz, vrizeltin scout, spy sabonzio archer cioliz gentleman, master salziz lady, mistress subizo farmhand, slave scalmiza farm-maid. milkmaid, slave girl perzimzio stranger, foreigner pazuz native primischol free man baischur beloved one, "my own" scalgonzus bondsman, porter dilzio day scaurin night dizol Sunday discula Monday munizza Tuesday aleziz Wednesday mirzisil Thursday haurizpia Friday horzka Saturday limix light conchsis darkness, night

tonziz shadow, shade vaccinaz week lolzo month azil year scalo early, morning pinchzi late, afternoon mumizanz tomorrow. morning zluariz January scantido February omischo March aminzo April tiriszinthio May archindolis June zigionz July gargischol August scandidoz September oscilanz October holischa November denizimo December ginschinz first scoinz third anischiz sixth joiniz ninth kalizinz evening nuschanz clothing, outfit duneziz shirt obirischa sleeve fugeniz hose, pants laschua leggings zizinel satchel

fuziz strap diulleia leather boot bizeris small boot inpelziaz shoe zischion spurs zazlmoz belt morschis leather scatil skirt, tunic rogazin skin, pelt scilia cowl. hood marezia hair blanket/shirt cunzio coat, cover ganguzia, curchozia cap kanscho hat scolzia mark linchz pound mazanz knife blanschil butcher knife spanzol hammer miska pliers, pincers zabla file zimischil saw guzim chisel scanipla grindstone biminzsta, sciria hatchet, axe blinchzia hoe, pickaxe kalziga garden-knife sculiz, binscha awl, bodkin zanziel stylus kanfur hook brazchia pole, staff

zizam bowl, dish, plate zuinta woodworker's plane zizim compass, circle hogiz drill zonz hoe, mattock milzimzia sieve, sifter kazinz kettle, tank nochzido saucepan lachzim fork ochzia rake spirlizim scythe zinzia sickle galschiriz, zichzimil doubleaxe sconz anvil grogezin coal banchzenuz bellows bag bumberiz wagon zimiz bar, rail gugiziz axle, axis stigienz wheel buchziz hub reldiaz stanchion cauenel, furanz part, load, trucking unit ischiazin storehouse, reserve ranchil plow scolmiz, ziginz, zinz plowshare ganizida, scaleis, umbienziz wasteland

golziol silo halzima field, acre lauziminiza earth creiza land zamzia property gigunz funded land, benefitory gauschin writing room, studio hauschlaz horn, ink-horn bilischiz ink banzlaz feather, plume arziaz lime, chalk schunz pumice straulmiz line, pole bulschaiz lead branischiaz parchment guschiaz press, squeezer luschanz tin, pewter kilmindiaz saffron schamiz tablet, blackboard brizimaz stylus gaulmiz compass ruszianz pipe, pole zischel sink gozionz goldsmith's tool ziziniz wool blanschinz lead wire ploniz loom, weaving tool buuinz chest alegrinz capsule, box

gizimiz crate guruz flax biriz tow ruziminz distaff lizchaz spindle ordelz spinner uazimanz yarn, thread almiz reel, bobbin vazitelz yarn-hook nulsiz needle ziriskans thimble dinz money bag, pouch balz cloth schaugur skirt lining schirizun patch tenziz clothing zamiriz work clothes, uniform nasunz net naschiz linen rasinz rip, scrap hollbaiz shawl oiralbruin jewelry naczuon necklace gragischon bracelet haurizin ring curizan border, braid moruuela leather pants galizima leather helmet/cap scurilz medallion, disk dilizanz sword

zanchur leather band zichlz hilt, handle guuniz pin schaniz sheath ruiz border/edge of a shield zuzianz weapon squair arc grizianz sinew braliz bolt bluschanz point buzion, ploschinanz arrow curschin hoe, mattock spalun shaft bursich stretcher amizdel armor, item of armor fronich rein spurz frame, moulding zineuel wire lucza toolshed bolis tannery schuuarz silt bizbio nail kailamanz wine-press zabuz press glucziminiz vat gulsich tub, pail, bucket suzgulaz brush flanishlanz razor, knife burskaldiz plowshare gacniz money, tender corizin quarter of a city,

neighborhood aschuanz bucket famigol vessel, container schuldemiz tub husic pot, can gugurez material, cloth gulginz funnel omezin ring, circlet laminic cask, barrel plucz bottom, ground bubenez runner zuchzizer bunghole scilanz faucet, tap buschinz grape juice vischoreiz wine briczinz beer cherin grains, cereals anic hops baczanz malt vischunil wine garden stogin vine ranziaz, alischol bunch of grapes brisianz beer grain curschul wine splinz stake, post scruiz fence stamziz stick planizunz vard comzimaz house coindaz living room

stoing bathroom kalchizinz pantry, cellar gauschuliz chambers, boudoir stariz stable pirschaz crib, manger duliric toilet zamzia inner chambers oirinschianz barn danis site, space, park susinna shovel sculiz pike spaulz sickle ralzoiz straw guguniz chaff vralischiz hay bauzimiz fodder bonizimz stove . burizindiz fire flagur flame buinz lumber, tinder lischianz branch, trunk zinzia ash amolic pot, saucepan cranischil pitcher, mug pruiuanz tankard, stein giruschaz grill scholl saucer feleiz spoon, ladle beoril cup, mug nanzoiz goblet

blzbin lunch biblbalz table wine buziz bowl, basin aulzel water marchildulz salad melzimaz meat melzita honey agruiz mustard parreiz bread pufeia flat bread cauizeil cake, pie, tart scraphinz donut lamischiz fir tree pazimbu medlar tree schalmindibuz almond tree bauschuz maple tree hamischa adler tree laizscla lime tree scoibuz boxwood tree gramzibuz chestnut tree scoica beech, rose hip bumbirich hazel tree zaimzabuz quince tree gruzimbuz cherry tree culmendiabuz cherry seed guskalbuz Italian oak gigunzibuz fig tree bizarmol ash tree zamzila beech tree schomschia spruce tree clamizibuz laurel tree



gonizla perennial plant zaschibuz mastic tree schamilnibuz juniper tree pomziaz apple tree mizamabuz black mulberry tree burschiabuz broom tree laschiabuz mountain ash tree golinzia plane tree sparmichibuz peach tree zirumzibuz pear tree burzimibuz plum tree gimeldia pine tree noinz swamp tree lamschiz, scolaz, wagiziaz willow tree omalzibuz knotgrass vischobuz yew tree gulizbaz birch tree

schirobuz maple tree orschibuz oak tree muzimibuz nut tree gisgiaz caltrop, thistle izziroz brier, bramble bush gluuiz reed ausiz hemlock tree/pipe florisca balsam zizria cinnamon crichzial cardamom diziama sweetwood lanischa Christmas rose muzimia nutmeg gulgia galangal garelza clove kunx lemon barschin ginger cririschia laurel, bay leaf zusguel pepper galigiz caraway culgela maybell gurizama yarrow magizuna, gaxuurinz hellebore bruschla centaury kirischia gentian saxia sugar scukurriz celandine zichio plantain gischiz daisy pluschia pollen

dugrus bloodroot bouizia, spiriz impatiens sizia chard cuz poppy cauzia cress gramko cranesbill, geranium balenzinzia southernwood pabruz pepper herb ruzia rose chorischia lily monischia agrimony scaliziz sage raiz rue garoz hyssop liniz lavendar guris, cursez millet, sorghum fulzia marigold dizia diptam ozris mullein gauriz ground vine nischil catnip luschia loyage grischol savory agonzia columbine maschin valerian framiz angelica grimizia turnip, beet daschia arnica karinz lovegrass briunz fennel perschil benedictine

sanschul sanicle fenisgronz houseleek karischa wormwood nascuil nightshade laufrica coltsfoot bulchzia rapunzel gluziaz, fluischa mint marizima ergot gurzlaniz deerberry flichziz bearberry duziliuz chives clarischil garlic prurziz, juziz leek philzia thin leek dizia allium pazia, magriz henbane basin pumpkin, gourd gragiz black caraway mixaziz radish lozunz shallot kirinz cucumber grugiziz radish dunschia sorrel grachia garden cress scrurithil parsnip felischa chervil zugezia dill kauschin, vrschianz cabbage pischir celery pransiz parsley gruizia hazel

graxia violet galschia gama zischla forget-me-not gliaz gladiola duniz thistle riaz wheatgrass scorzia stinging nettle aseruz hemp inblz burr flusez clover rischal wild mint cachxis wheat ruizio rye glackxa spelt diuxia barley zamza oats, oatmeal zingia sea oats frazinz horsetail mazma bean pixiz pea gullox chickpea zuzil lentil circhza vetch kachzia monster argumzio griffin laschiz eagle riuschiz vulture scaruz ibis balbunz eagle owl flauriz pelican bozibo hunter's falcon balfinz woodpecker hauscuz goshawk zirunz sparrowhawk moguz buzzard sculez kestrel warmaz heron nozia owl glamzla jay noizbir night raven aschia star dorinschiz red-backed shrike drozima, brauz thrush asgriz kingfisher bachiz, ninxia crow bauscha snipe, woodcock wilizchio hoopoe gabia quail scalla blackbird



duschio, luschia duck wiwia titmouse zanczia lark nolsca nightingale agrizia waterstalk mostz finch ermosiz thistle-finch birischa grass-gnat raischo wren viperiz shrike loginx crane urschlo stork gugurunz ostrich bilzinus parrot zamziz peacock ualueria bat alxia magpie schuwil, gagria goose nazischo rooster nazia hen birizo chicken gazun chick raiza partridge prinscho kite galschia pigeon ligeschia wood pigeon haischa turtle dove vizzia swallow uoxniza cuckoo sapiduz bee amzia wasp

gruza grasshopper ariz cornworm luxzia butterfly, moth virenz locust arschia fly mizia gnat kanzia flea boiz lightning bug diezo hornet calnz cricket

